

1115

Received & Indexed  
DEC 18 2017  
FCC Mailroom

The 115th Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

December 12, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**RE: CONNECT AMERICA FUND, WC DOCKET NO. 10-90**

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write to bring to your attention the enclosed letter from seven rural Oregon broadband providers requesting that the Commission increase funding for participants in the Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) plan. Funding the A-CAM plan as requested will result in significant additional broadband connectivity for rural communities in Oregon.

As a member of Congress from a rural district, I ask that you give serious consideration to the request from these rural Oregon broadband providers and authorize additional A-CAM funding so more rural Oregonians can fully realize the opportunities afforded by access to broadband. In addition, I would urge you to consider additional universal service funding for those Oregon rural carriers not participating in the A-CAM plan.

Closing the digital divide that currently exists in rural America is critical. I respectfully urge the Commission to act by the end of the year to allocate additional funding for the A-CAM program.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance. I thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



KURT SCHRADER  
Member of Congress

Attachment

December 4, 2017

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We are seven rural telecommunications carriers that elected the revised offer of Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) support in the State of Oregon. We urge the Federal Communications Commission to adopt an order before the end of this year to authorize additional A-CAM funding up to \$200/month per eligible customer location to enable more rural consumers in the State of Oregon to have the broadband connectivity necessary for jobs, education, healthcare, and economic development.

The Oregon Office of Economic Analysis reported this week that every county in the State of Oregon saw population growth in 2017, and it projects increased population for the state in the coming decade. At the same time, rural areas in Oregon have higher unemployment rates, and the rural economy is less diverse than in metro areas. A significant portion of the rural economy in Oregon is dependent on agriculture (both farming and ranching) and tourism. Access to broadband is critical to economic growth and productivity in rural Oregon. The need is greater than ever to ensure that Oregonians have access to broadband in all corners of the state.

Allocating additional funding to further extend broadband in our communities will bring other important benefits. The net increase in population in rural Oregon is largely due to people moving from elsewhere. In some cases, people are choosing a rural locale for retirement; in other cases, younger workers are moving to more rural areas to raise their families. Further extending the reach of broadband is critical so that children in our rural communities can do their homework at home, and our aging population can access government services and medical care via broadband.

Providing additional A-CAM funding now will result in defined and measurable progress in broadband deployment in rural Oregon. The companies in Oregon that elected the revised offer of A-CAM support committed to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if further funding were made available by December 31, 2017. Collectively, additional funding of \$200/month per location would result in 720 additional locations in Oregon having access to a minimum of 25/3 Mbps broadband service, and 674 new locations having access to service of at least 10/1 Mbps. The number of A-CAM funded locations that would remain on “reasonable request” in Oregon would decrease by 41 percent (876 locations) if funding is increased to this level.

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
December 4, 2017  
Page 2

We stand ready to meet the additional broadband deployment obligations that we committed to earlier this year. We are developing our plans to upgrade network infrastructure in our communities and are anxious to know whether additional funding will be provided so that we can complete our network planning. If the Commission authorizes additional funding now, we will be able to implement an efficient and logical extension of our networks to serve more remote customers.

The Commission established the A-CAM program to bring broadband to rural America. It is time to build on that solid foundation to take further steps to close the digital divide. We urge the Commission to act by the end of this year to allocate additional funding to carry out its original decision to provide A-CAM funding for up to \$200/month per eligible location.

Sincerely,

Asotin Telephone Company  
Cascade Utilities, Inc.  
Helix Telephone Company  
Monroe Telephone Company  
Pioneer Telephone Cooperative  
Roome Telecommunications Inc.  
Trans-Cascade Telephone Company

A-CAM Companies in Oregon

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Brendan Carr



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

February 13, 2018

The Honorable Kurt Schrader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2431 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schrader:

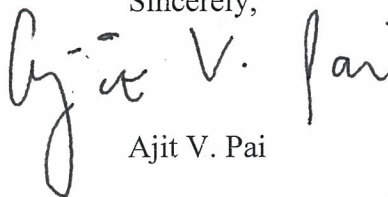
Thank you for your letter on the importance of connecting additional rural consumers in Oregon to high-speed broadband. Your views are very important and will be entered into the record of our proceeding on the Connect America Fund and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in urban areas. A key way to reach this goal is by updating the high-cost universal service program to encourage cooperatives and other small, rural carriers to build more online infrastructure.

We need more deployment in sparsely populated rural areas if we're going to extend digital opportunity to all Americans. But I've heard from community leaders, Congress, and carriers that insufficient, unpredictable funding has kept them from reaching this goal. That is why I recently shared with my fellow commissioners an order that would promote more high-speed broadband deployment in rural areas. If adopted, it would provide over \$500 million in additional funding for cooperatives and small rural carriers—including those participating in the Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) plan. And it seeks public input on both further increasing support to current A-CAM recipients and on giving legacy rate-of-return carriers a new chance to elect model-based support. Increased funding will boost broadband deployment in rural America, and the accompanying reforms will put our high-cost system on a more efficient path, helping to ensure that every American can benefit from the digital revolution.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai